

19 May 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

FROM: Assistant Director, GCD

SUBJECT: Whether or not to increase the Biographic Register ~~1/0~~

1. The Special Research Center and GPC have been making demands upon the Biographic Register which the small staff of the Register's Regional Branch is quite unable to cope with.

2. The most crying need, from the Special Research Center, is for a current and world-wide directory of diplomatic and consular officials, attaches, and the like.

It may well be argued that it is the business of State Department to provide such a directory, but it is totally useless for us to hope that it will ever be able to do so. The State Department Biographic Intelligence unit is an excellent one, it turns out a very considerable volume of work with a small staff, and it gives us every cooperation - allowing our analysts to work in the State files almost as if they were their own. But BI in State has no machine equipment with which to maintain a current directory, and it is overloaded with work for the State Department itself. In view of State's budgetary situation it is idle to think that any insistence by the other agencies would effect a sufficient strengthening of State's BI unit to accomplish the job which we need done.

While it is the Special Research Center which most urgently needs a directory of this sort, it is obvious that it would be of great value to nearly all intelligence operations.

3. GPC has been making heavy demands on the Register, and informs me that it will make still heavier demands in future. Their need is for biographic reports on foreign officers, statesmen, lecturers, writers and other personalities whom it might be profitable to attack by propaganda or who, in other ways, might prove to be good targets or tools for GPC. It seems quite certain that GPC's success in its mission will depend to a large degree upon the adequacy and up-to-dateness of its information concerning the people whom it attacks or uses.

4. Both of the jobs described above fall upon the Regional Branch of the Biographic Register - the Branch which deals with all categories

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Total strength of the branch, as now approved, is comprising professionals ranging from GS-5 to GS-13 and 5 clerical hands.

The staff is a good one. Many of the senior professionals have been working in biographic intelligence for years - with OSS, or State, or G-2. They have a sufficient command of Slavic, Far Eastern, and West European languages to do their own spade-work in source materials. We require the junior professionals to do most of their own typing, thus making them responsible for the accuracy of their final reports and thus avoiding the need of tying up our authorized strength in typists.

It takes time to write a good biographic report - whether there be many references or few to deal with. If there are many, then time is needed to put them in coherent and logical order, straining out duplications and errors; if there are few, then time is needed for detective work both here and in the other agencies searching for leads. For this reason the small staff has not been able to average more than about 200 formal biographic reports per month, and at the present time it has a backlog of 80 requests which it has not yet been able to tackle.

5. By making a number of space readjustments within OGD we could, if authorized to do so, beef up the Regional Branch by a total of [] hands. I do not dare promise that this would enable us to meet all commitments, but it would certainly put us in a much better position to do so. Working conditions would suffer because of the inevitable crowding, but I feel that this would be more than compensated by the knowledge that the Branch was being given the strength to make its mission a good deal closer of accomplishment.

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6. The following are the present authorized and proposed E/O's for the Regional Branches:

How it works

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7. I do not wish to press too strongly for approval on this proposal, because the consequences of disapproval would not have so far-reaching and disastrous an effect upon Agency-wide operations as would, for example, disapproval of my concurrent request for additional hands in Liaison and Library. If we do not get the hands we need in Liaison and Library, then the whole flow of documents to all Offices will gradually bog down.

8. On the other hand, I do believe that this is a sound proposal. I believe the jobs which need to be done are real and urgent. Special Research Center and other units of CIA urgently need a current directory of diplomatic and consular people all over the world, and if we can't get State to do this job - and I know we can't - then we had better tackle it ourselves. And if OPC requires more biographic data than we can provide, then it is surely better to strengthen CIA's central biographic set-up than to oblige OPC to make its people do their own biographic work.

9. If this proposal, as well as the concurrent request for additional hands in Liaison and Library, is approved, the following will be the net results:

Total OGD now approved T/O
 Additional Library & Liaison
 Additional Biographic Register
 New Ceiling

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 Approved

 Disapproved
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